

The Tale of Two Classrooms

Mr. Klein

It is the beginning of the school day and students file into Mr. Klein's chemistry class after a weekend. As students take their seats, Mr. Klein begins class by directing their attention to the interactive whiteboard, which reads,

Learning Intention: We are learning to balance chemical equations.

Why? So that we can ensure that all atoms from the reactants are accounted for in the products created in the chemical reaction.

Success Criteria: I can use my understanding of atomic structure and the periodic table to

1. Balance single-replacement reactions
2. Balance double-replacement reactions
3. Balance reactions with polyatomic ions
4. Explain how matter was conserved throughout each chemical reaction

To supplement the learning intention and success criteria, Mr. Klein tells his students, *Today, we are going to use our understanding of atomic structure and the periodic table of elements to determine how much of each reactant is needed in a chemical reaction, and what the resulting compounds and by-products are. You know you have been successful when you can balance single-replacement reactions, double-replacement reactions, and reactions involving polyatomic ions. You will also be able to explain how matter was conserved in the reaction.*

Students grab spots at their laboratory benches and get out their notebooks designed for chemistry. Mr. Klein's class continues with modeling of examples and nonexamples, student discussion and practice, and partner discussion about how matter is conserved, and finally, with a self-assessment for each student to whether or not he or she met each success criterion and which they need to practice more.

Ms. Heizer's

It is the beginning of the school day and student file into Ms. Heizer's English class after a weekend.

The students begin their morning routine by unpacking their book bags, placing their lunches in their designated "cubby," placing their "take-home" folders in the basket on her desk, and quickly finding their seats to start the morning work. Students notice the that today's work is on figurative language and retrieve their literacy notebooks from their desks. Following the step-by-step instructions, students copy down the different types of figurative language, define each one using their student dictionaries, also in their desks, and then retrieve and complete a handout where they are asked to circle, highlight, or underline examples of figurative language in a nonfiction story.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?